

Minutes for CPC Meeting of 1/12/06, 7:30 pm–10:30 pm, Acton Memorial Library

Attending:

Peter Berry, Jon Benson, Tory Beyer, Catherine Coleman, Walter Foster, Matt Lundberg, Andy Magee, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes (late), Ed Starzec, Roland Bartl

Absent:

Nancy Tavernier

Susan acted as Secretary pro tem until Ken arrived at 8 pm.

Application Presentations:

IRON WORK FARM: JONES TAVERN II

The president of Iron Work Farm (IWF), Larry Sorli, made the presentation to the Committee. Mr. Sorli made the following comments, which were not reflected in the application.

- Once this Jones Tavern project is completed both the Jones Tavern and Faulkner House need painting; the Faulkner House needs to be connected to the sewer system.
- A tenant resides at the Faulkner House; whenever there is turnover, the apartment must be upgraded.
- Interior restoration had to be deferred until the roof and gutters were replaced.
- As leverage, the IWF will contribute \$8000. This includes \$1000 raised to date specifically for the project as part of their year-end appeal.

In response to questions from the Committee members the following information was provided:

- The sheathing boards dating from 1734 and ca. 1818 were made of white pine; old growth pine is mostly heartwood, decay resistant and almost as hard as oak.
- MHC approves the use of copper gutters.
- Cedar shingles are likely to be required under the Preservation Restriction(s) on the building.
- If one went to asphalt shingles, the fear is that removal of the strapping boards could damage the original sheathing boards; also it is labor intensive to remove them.
- The estimate for the application was done by the same contractor who restored the chimney, and his estimates are reasonable.
- The current galvanized gutters are rusting out. They are subject to chemical damage due to acid rain.
- Last year the IWF was awarded \$35,000, and they contributed \$5000. The project came in under.
- The application request has been reduced to \$41,000.

ACTION: The applicant was asked to submit a letter to the CPC with the revised funding request.

- Programming of the Jones Tavern is in place. A well-attended annual Patriots Day event is held which includes trolley rides; the Children's Discovery Museum and the local schools play a role in bringing people to experience the historic homes.
- IWF will endeavor to have a tenant at each of the historic houses as not only is the rental income important, but the tenants keep an eye on the buildings.
- It would be possible to substitute galvanized gutters for copper gutters as most of them are at the rear of the building. Galvanized gutters cost half as much for materials, although their higher installation cost would make them higher overall than copper gutters.
- Town Counsel found the project eligible and recommended the historic preservation restriction be updated to reflect the changed amount of the town's financial interest. This should be done quickly once funding is approved to ensure there is not a hold up in reimbursement.
- IWF has been reimbursed for the chimney restoration project.

TOWN OF ACTON: TOWN HALL ROOF

Dean Charter, Municipal Properties Director, presented the application for the Town. The applicant submitted a new application with final budgetary information and also brought a sample of the slate roofing tile from the Town Hall building.

The applicant explained the process by which the project was put to bid, and provided information on the bids received. The lowest qualified bid was \$157,700. That, plus the \$12,000 in architectural fees incurred to date plus a 10% contingency leaves the project with a \$65,470 deficit from last year's funding. Pinnacle, the lowest bidder, has agreed to hold the bid price until May 2006, so the price is firm.

The following additional information was provided to the CPC in response to questions from committee members.

- The alternate work quoted in the proposal is for replacing the copper gutter facings and fixing the gutters. This work needs to be done and would require similar staging. To do the work as a separate job would cost as much as \$25,000, versus the \$14,500 quoted in the lowest bid.
- The biggest risk in the proposal is that Pinnacle goes out of business, in which case the Town would contract the next lowest bidder, Capeway, who came in at \$600 higher. The next biggest risk is that the roof rot uncovered is more than expected and that the Town has to spend more to repair the roof. Once the project is begun, there is no turning back; the Town will provide additional funds needed to properly repair the roof.
- If the project is not funded this year, the Town will return next year with a similar proposal, probably for a total of \$175,000, and the Town Hall roof will continue to rot in the meantime.
- There is no salvage value in the tile; it is too labor intensive to remove tiles intact.
- There is no historic preservation restriction on the building, but the Town Hall is in the historic district and the Historic District Commission has approved only slate, and not the

asphalt alternative. (An historic preservation restriction is not required for CPC funding since the Town owns the Town Hall, and therefore its interests are protected.)

- The contract would require the work to be completed in 60 days, but it could actually be longer. In any case, the work would be completed by the Summer of 2006.
- The applicant has confidence in the current architect. It is the same one who did the Memorial Library expansion. The applicant lost confidence in the original architectural firm for this proposal when the principal architect left the firm.
- The \$12,000 incurred to date was for more detailed architectural work than was performed for the original proposal.
- The CPC trimmed the applicant's funding last year due to budget constraints, and not because of any lack of confidence in the project cost estimates.
- The Town does have some funds available. If the lowest bid had come in at \$135,000, the Town may have been able to fund the difference, but whereas the lowest bid was \$158,000, the Town could not address the discrepancy.
- A comment was made that the Town may want an historic preservation restriction to protect the Town from the Town.

TOWN OF ACTON: BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Tom Michelman, representing the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (FBFRT) and Roland Bartl, Town Planner, representing the Town, presented the proposal. The total cost for the Acton portion of the project is estimated at \$4.4 million, with the Town's share of the cost estimated at \$660,000 (15% of the total). The total design cost ("25% Design") is estimated at \$180,000. The applicant is asking for \$125,000, to be added to the \$75,000 of funding from last year's monies.

Since last year, not much has happened physically. The Town has been trying to secure acceptable terms for the acquisition of land from the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) and the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA). The Town is also lobbying the State House to pass legislation that would protect the Town from the environmental liability of the properties. Once this is in place, the Town can proceed with the land acquisitions, and then spend money on the design. The Town is asking for funding at this level for this year in order to spread out the funding over several years and ensure that funds are available immediately when needed.

The following issues were raised during the discussion with the applicant:

- The Great Road crossing has not been designed yet. It is not known if it will be a grade-level crossing or not. Non-grade-level crossings are millions of dollars. The FBFRT does not necessarily agree with the Town on the need for a non-grade-level crossing.
- The \$180,000 estimate is for the "25% Design". The Town could be responsible for 10% construction costs as well.
- Conservation regulations need to be considered along the entire trail.
- There is some complexity and some uncertainty to calculating and estimating the costs that the Town would be responsible for.

- The total cost estimate of \$4.4 million includes \$1.5 million for railroad tie removal and disposal. The FBFRT has identified a railroad tie recycler willing to take the ties out and recycle them for no net cost, which would reduce the project cost by \$1.5 million and potentially reduce the Town cost to \$300,000. (On the other hand, the Town's cost is based on the "25% Design" work, which may not change much with the savings from recycling the railroad ties.)
- When will the appropriate funding be spent, if approved? The liability legislation is pending in the economic stimulus package bill. The design phase can't begin until the liability issue is worked out.
- Is this funding request adequate to keep the project moving forward? Full Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding is scheduled for 2008, so the "100% Design" is required by Fall 2007. Therefore, the "25% Design" should be complete by Spring of 2007. If the design requires six months of work, then we need to start right away or risk losing the TIP funding.
- In response to the suggestion that TIP funding could be postponed to a later year, Tom emphasized that we cannot expect the TIP funding to always be there. The BFRT was first proposed in 1987—19 years ago—and still nothing has been built. Do we really want to wait any longer? The project has seen broad support wherever it has been discussed.

TOWN OF ACTON: STONE CHAMBER PRESERVATION

Linda McElroy gave the presentation to the CPC. This is a joint application with the New England Antiquities Research Association (NEARA). The applicant is reducing the amount of funding requested to \$15,000. Through volunteer work and donations, the project will save about \$5,000. NEARA has also pledged \$1,000 for the project. The revised budget breaks down as follows:

Deed Restriction	\$ 500
Archeology	3,000
Masonry	7,500
Walling Stones	1,000
Equipment Rental	1,000
Educational Panels	<u>3,000</u>
 TOTAL:	 \$16,000
 - NEARA funding	 <u>(1,000)</u>
 TOTAL REQUEST:	 \$15,000

The following additional information was provided during the question and answer period after the presentation.

- The applicant will provide the CPC an electronic copy of the PowerPoint presentation given tonight.
- The Historic Commission intends to write a letter of recommendation for the project.
- There is no requirement to use “historic stones” in rebuilding the structure. The mason will select stones of suitable size and material.
- Educational panels may not be eligible for funding under the CPA law.
- The Town (as represented by the Board of Selectmen) support the application, and in fact is a co-applicant.
- As part of the project, the site will be publicized and made accessible as a public resource.
- The applicant should submit a letter documenting the changes to the proposal.
- The applicant should rely heavily on the work of an archeologist as well as photo-documentation to preserve a record of the chamber before disturbing it.
- The applicant was uncertain if the project requires an archeological survey before proceeding.
- All volunteers will sign liability waivers before working on site.

Old Business

The committee agreed to postpone discussion of Old Business until the next meeting, due to the late hour. (These items include approval of the minutes and discussion of the “judgment call” projects in the Town Counsel’s memo to the CPC.)

New Business

The committee discussed the next meeting’s agenda. We will spend 5 minutes brainstorming on each project. The meeting will be held in Room 204 of Town Hall.

Roland will check into the amount of any unused allocated monies that should be rolled back into the total funds to be distributed this round.

It was noted that committee members viewed the Fitzgerald Piano last Saturday. At no time during the viewing hours was a quorum of members present at the same time.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ken Sghia-Hughes, Clerk
Community Preservation Committee